

M e m o r a n d u m

TO: Mr. Pete Gutwald, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning

FROM: Jennifer M. Smith, Geosyntec Consultants

DATE: July 11 2007

SUBJECT: Zoning Code Update Session I – Meeting Summary
June 25, 2007, Second Floor Conference Room
Harford County Office Building

Attendees:

Workgroup Members Present:

Ms. Susie Comer
Col. Charles Day
Ms. Carol Deibel
Mr. Samuel Fielder, Jr.
Mr. Rowan G. Glidden
Mr. William E. Goforth
Mr. Frank Hertsch
Ms. Susan B. Heselton
Mr. Jeffrey K. Hettleman
Mr. Tim Hopkins
Mr. Douglas Howard
Mr. Gil Jones
Mr. Gregory J. Kappler
Ms. Gloria Moon
Mr. Torrence Pierce
Mr. Frank Richardson
Mr. Lawrason Sayre
Mr. Chris Swain
Mr. Jim Turner
Mr. Bill Vanden Eynden
Mr. Craig Ward
Ms. Marisa Willis

Workgroup Members Absent:

Mr. Michael Leaf
Mr. Jay Young

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County Representatives Present:

Mr. Pete Gutwald, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning

Mr. Tony McClune, Deputy Director, Department of Planning and Zoning

Ms. Janet Gleisner, Chief, Division of Land Use and Transportation

Ms. Theresa Raymond, Administrative Assistant, Director's Office

Facilitators:

Ms. Jennifer M Smith, Geosyntec

Mr. Steven P. Roy, Geosyntec

Mr. Craig Thompson, Geosyntec

Meeting Summary:

The first meeting of the Harford County Zoning Code Update Workgroup was held at 2:00 pm in the second floor conference room at the offices of the Department of Planning and Zoning. A meeting agenda was distributed to each workgroup member. Ms. Jennifer Smith introduced herself, Mr. Steve Roy and Mr. Craig Thompson, all of Geosyntec Consultants, the consulting firm hired by Harford County as the facilitator of the workgroup meetings. Ms. Smith and Mr. Roy will be leading the meetings for the purposes of keeping the workgroup on track, keeping the meetings on schedule, and ensuring that each member has an equal opportunity to express his or her suggestions, ideas and comments. Mr. Thompson will be documenting the meeting discussions. The four Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning representatives that were present at the initial meeting were introduced. Mr. Pete Gutwald, Harford County's Director of Planning and Zoning; Mr. Tony McClune, Deputy Director of Planning and Zoning; Ms. Janet Gleisner, Chief, Land Use and Transportation Planning Section; and, Ms. Theresa Raymond, Administrative Specialist with the Director's Office will attend each meeting as observers and will be present to answer questions technical questions on the existing and revised code. Geosyntec contact information was provided, as follows:

Geosyntec Consultants Office

(410) 381-4333

Email: jsmith@geosyntec.com

A sign-in sheet was distributed to the group. Each member was asked to verify that the contact information was correctly noted and to indicate their preference on method of contact from the general public. It was expressed to the workgroup members that contact information for each member will be posted on the internet under the project webpage created under the Harford County website. The website can be accessed at:

<http://www.harfordcountymd.gov/ZCUpdate/index.cfm>.

Communication outside of the regularly scheduled meetings was discussed briefly. The County will provide a web page on the County's internet website for posting meeting summaries, announcements, location and time of meetings and agendas. In addition, all members will receive an email reminding them of the next meeting as well as the topic to be discussed at that meeting.

Each member of the workgroup was asked to introduce themselves and the organization which they represent. Each member was asked to state one topic or item that they hope to discuss or accomplish during the meeting process.

The proposed format of the upcoming meeting was presented to the workgroup members. The rules of meeting conduct that the workgroup will be asked to follow were also briefly discussed. It was noted that should a member find that he or she cannot attend a meeting, a replacement may be appointed by the organization which the member represents. However, the replacement will be acting only as a spectator, will not sit at the table and will not be allowed to comment on zoning code discussion. This is to help maintain the group dynamics and avoid repetitive discussions of materials previously presented.

The meeting schedule and syllabus was distributed to each workgroup member. The schedule indicates meetings to be held on the 2nd and fourth Monday of each month, to begin at 2:00 pm in the 2nd floor conference room of the Harford County Office Building. All meetings will start and end on time. The syllabus was briefly presented. Each meeting session will be focused on a section of the revised zoning code. Workgroup members were asked to come prepared to each Session having read the section of the code referred to in the syllabus as well as the Land Use Element Plan Implementation Strategies referred to in the syllabus.

Mr. Pete Gutwald presented the structure of the zoning code document and a brief summary of a **representation of the significant changes in the Code**. It was stressed to the workgroup members that the proposed revised code is not a perfect document by any means, but is a work in progress. Key changes in the proposed code were highlighted. Mr. Gutwald noted that all significant changes will be presented in more detail for review at the appropriate Session. Highlighted changes include the following:

Several sections of the code have been relocated, condensed, or eliminated. All definitions have been consolidated into one location to try to lessen confusion among those who use the code.

Landscaping and buffer yard sections are new sections in the proposed code. Several definitions have been added, deleted, or modified to clarify meanings.

Historic definitions have been clarified and incorporated into the definition section.

State mandates of 2004 and 2006 have been incorporated in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Overlay District section.

In the CRD and ENOD section, the standards were streamlined for easier reading and more flexibility was provided with the streetscaping standards.

A Water Source Protection District has been established for water source areas as identified by the Maryland Department of Environment.

A Corporate Office Park Development option was added which allows for a more flexible/mixed use design concept in the LI and CI zoning classifications.

For business districts, the criteria for shopping centers has been modified to a square footage (20,000 sq. ft for Board of Appeals approval).

Industrial districts now permit motor vehicle repair shops in the CI and GI districts as well as shopping centers in the CI district.

Hotels and motels have been added as a permitted use in the LI district.

MO districts have been modified to include a maximum 65 feet building height.

In the Agricultural district, a 100' buffer between private wells and agricultural uses was established; a transfer of development rights program has been established.

The CDS standards were removed from the RR district to the special development section.

In urban residential districts, the R district and flexible design standards were eliminated.

The residential office section was modified to clarify that all non-residential permitted uses require Board of Appeals approval.

In the signs section, standards have been changed to significantly reduce the size of and number signs on any given project.

The forest and tree conservation section has been clarified so that no forest retention or reforestation area can be located on a residential lot of less than 20,000 sq. ft. The

requirement to pay back reforestation/afforestation fee in lieu has been eliminated. The individual tree planting requirements have also been clarified.

The new landscaping section has established minimum criteria in which the standards would be applicable. It has also identified preferred locations and locations that should be avoided or need additional approvals from DPW, etc.

There is also a new landfill article to clarify these uses into four categories: sanitary and rubble landfills, solid waste transfer stations, and other county operated processing facilities.

The last noted change was that right to farm language was included as part of residential developments in the agriculture district.

A question and comment session followed the presentation. Questions and comments that were posed by the work group members are summarized below:

- Mr. Richardson asked whether Adequate Public Facilities was an included topic in workgroup discussion even though there are not many changes to it in the proposed code. The answer to the question was yes.
- Mr. Ward then asked if there is any document that shows all the changes between the documents. Mr. Gutwald stated that no, it would be nearly impossible to produce such a document because of the large amount of changes to the code. He stated that there was however, correlating references between the existing code and the proposed code. A reference guide was included in the copy presented to each workgroup member.
- Mr. Howard inquired whether variances were covered the same as special exemptions. Mr. Gutwald expressed that special exemptions were listed as ‘special exemptions.’
- Mr. Hertsch asked whether or not the 100-year flood plain was included in the proposed code. Mr. Gutwald stated that it was not. Col. Day then asked whether it could be ready for workgroup members before the revised zoning code review is complete. Mr. Gutwald stated that he would discuss this possibility with County Executive Craig.
- Mr. Kappler then inquired whether or not members would receive a copy of the 2004 Land Use Element Plan. The answer was yes, copies are available and were handed out to those members present who wished to obtain a copy.
- Mr. Ward asked if there was documentation of the overall goals or changes of the proposed zoning code. Mr. Gutwald explained that the 2004 Land Use Element Plan and associated Implementation Strategies should be utilized as the vision/goals for changes to the Zoning Code. Mr. Gutwald encouraged committee members to focus on the proposed draft code rather than focus on the changes from the existing zoning code. Ms. Deibel echoed Mr. Gutwald’s statement saying that the State of Maryland requires a Land Use Element Plan and that we have it and are trying to rewrite a pieced-together code from 1982 and that was their task at hand.

The question period was then over and copies of the revised zoning code were then handed out to all members present.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 pm.

Meeting Handouts:

1. Meeting Agenda
2. Workgroup Meeting Schedule 2007/08
3. Zoning Code Workgroup Syllabus 2007/08
4. Workgroup Meeting Format
5. Workgroup Meeting “Rules”
6. Draft Zoning Code, May 2007

Next Scheduled Meeting:

Date: July 16, 2007
Time: 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm
Topic: Session II Landscaping and Buffer Yards
Location: Harford County Administrative Office Building
220 South Main Street
2nd Floor Conference Room
Bel Air, MD 21014